DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 496 IR 057 767

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TITLE	Reading Habit Promotion in ASEAN Libraries.
PUB DATE	1999-08-00
NOTE	8p.; In: IFLA Council and General Conference. Conference Programme and Proceedings (65th, Bangkok, Thailand, August 20-28, 1999); see IR 057 674.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla65/papers/091-114e.htm.
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Foreign Countries; *Library Role; *Library Services; *Reading Habits; *Reading Programs
IDENTIFIERS	Asia (Southeast); Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the activities of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) libraries have undertaken to promote reading by increasing awareness among their people. First, factors limiting reading habits in ASEAN libraries are addressed, including: we are not a reading society, but a chatting society; the management of "3 M's" (man, money, and management strategies); and the lure of electronic media. Second, roles of local institutes or organizations in helping libraries to conduct reading habit promotion are examined, including the roles of family, libraries/librarians, mass media, and private and government sectors. Finally, some suggestions on effective methods and successful programs for reading habit promotion by ASEAN libraries are summarized, including: (1) book-based programming such as book lists, reading programs, performances, craft activities, competitions, and individual activities; (2) bringing books to the public through exhibits, pamphlets and other printed materials, and reading groups; and (3) electronic formats. ASEAN Libraries participating were from six countries: Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. (MES)

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ED 441 496

IFLANET
Search Contacts
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
Annual Conference

65th IFLA Council and General Conference

Bangkok, Thailand, August 20 - August 28, 1999

Conference Proceedings

Code Number: 091-114-E
Division Number: VII
Professional Group: Reading
Joint Meeting with: -
Meeting Number: 114
Simultaneous Interpretation: *No*

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Reading habit promotion in ASEAN libraries

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Abstract

This paper describes the different activities that ASEAN Libraries have undertaken to promote reading by increasing awareness among thier people. Firstly, factors limiting reading habit in ASEAN Libraries have been approached. Secondly roles of local institutes or organizations in helping libraries conducting reading habit promotion have been acknowledged. Finally some suggestions on effective methods and successful programs of reading habit promotion by ASEAN Libraries have been collected.

Paper

Reading is important for every body in order to cope with new knowledge in the changing world of the technological age. The importance and necessity will hopefully continue to increase in the years to come. However, the number of those who know how to read but do not read enough is also increasing. There are still some people, young and old, who cannot get access to reading activities and reading programs at all and some people who are able to read do not get access to such activities and programs, but in a dissatisfactory degree of relationship. They neither have much initial interest nor lasting interest in books and reading. The reading habit has to be built up and promoted from an early age.

In many developing countries have been launching extensive literacy campaigns, in the sense of teaching people to write and to read. But knowledge of characters and reading technics alone are not sufficient to develop real reading societies. People should be motivated to read and informed how to utilze reading materials to improve their own personality and their social

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environment. In this context roles of nongovernment organizatins, governmnet sectors, libraries, school and family are very important for mutual cooperation to promote reading habits to readers, especially, the role of libraries is very important as libraries are very important institutions as information centers and life long educational agencies.

The ASEAN nations have by no doubt a challenge experiences in the field of promotion of reading habits. Therefore the paper has been emphasized on factors limiting reading habits in ASEAN, roles of organizations in reading promotion and effective methods and successful programs in reading habit promotion.

"Reading habit promotion" in the paper means behavior which express the likeness of reading of individual, which occur regulary of leisure reading approach, types of reading, tastes of reading, uses of library services viewing on what they have read fixing on objectives of reading. **ASEAN Libraries** in the paper are libraries from 6 countries : Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

I. Factor Limiting reading habits in ASEAN Libraries

There are 3 major factors that present hinder the promotion of reading, salient among them are as follwos :

1.1 We are not reading society but chatting society the background of learning through culture. The cultural habit of their people prefer to listening and chatting more than reading. Traditionally schorlars are the same time animated and narrated written words from books to illiterate through reading aloud, animated reading dramatization or even demonstration. They are well-known and appreciated because books are not so available in those countries. It was necessary because of the dificulty in learning alphabets and in acquiring reading skill where written or printed materials were scarce and treated as valuable objects. Traditional reading animators were elder members of the family, members of religious institutions, professionals or amateurs. The inherited cultural habit has been transmitted and obstacled to reading habit from generation to another. In short, at the present; thier societies still depend their own information rather than written one.

1.2 The management of 3 M's is still be crucial obstacles of old saga : man, money and management strategies.

- In sufficient libraries ; public libraries, school libraries or special libraries located in urben areas rather than rural areas.
- Insufficient or shortage collection of books and reading materials for public's use or students' use
- Insufficient or shortage educated library manpower.
- Limited budget, funding a bare minimum a collection resourees.

1.3 The lure of electronic media.

TV's potential effect on children's reading performance has become an issue of growing concern among education and often cited as a cause for the decline in reading if children spent amount of their viewing time only programs which entertain rather than educate.

II. Roles of local institutes or organizations in helping libraries conducting reading promotion.

The task of encouraging positive reading interest to foster a love for reading which will promote a reading culture and society is not an easy one. All parties concerned national institutes or private sectors should work together. All effort should be coordinated to achieve the goal.

2.1 Roles of family.

Parents are clearly important socialising agents. Parents who spend time reading to their children giving them the best possible start on the road to literacy. Many research studies have pointed out that the children who do best in literacy skills at school are those who come from homes where there are books, where their parents spend time reading to their children and where children see their parents and older siblings engage in reading activities.

Some creative suggetions for parents to forter reading habit to childern : *Read story books aloud, create a learning environment by setting up a mini reading corner and flood with reading materials, visit the library ; book shops, book-prize as gift.*

2.2 Roles of libraries, librarians, library programs.

Libraries are a means to stimulate and develop the reading interest the following is some strategies which libraries and libraries play important roles in promotion on reading.

1. The librarian should help develop among the reader's pleasant and positive attitude towards reading. The pleasant and positive attitude of the reader should be developed first before someone is able to automatically form the habit of reading and the loee for books

2. The principal function of the librarian is to serve to course of education formally or informally. When we think of the librarian's role on education, we think first of books and of what she does with books. Librarians have a responsibility and an opportunity to go out and tell the public what they have in their libraries and find out what they want to read, improve and keep improving the set-up of the library to encourage readers to stay and browse.

3. In any effective school library program, the librarian should have definitite responsibilities in certain areas of the curriculum and should have an active teaching role. But this role must always be coordinated with what is taking place in the classroom. With his wide knowledge of materials and techniques for using them, the librarian can make a strong partner in the planning and implementing of the educational enterprise.

4. Making the library attractive to public and schools

Some detail of activities has been collected at the third part of the paper.

2.3 Roles of Mass media

Radio, TV, neswpapers and magazines can help advertise reading projects, village libraries, seminars-training workshops, interviews of reading authorities / writers / teachers and organizations involved in the reading activities to promote reading, hence the help of these media personnel will be sought.

2.4 Roles of private and government sectors in helping Libraries conducting reading society.

The professional sectors or agencies play a great deal to elevate the standard of library and services through activities which aim to develop or to encourge activities of reading and writing those are : *The National Language and Literature Agency National Book Development Council Committee, Reading Association, Library Association, Writer's Association and P.E.N. International Club, Parent Teacher Association and Women's Association. etc.*

III. Effective Methods and some successful programs for Reading Habit Promotion in ASEAN Libraries.

Programs of activities are broadly categorized into 3 main groups : Those are **Book-based programing, Bringing books to public, and New format to promote reading :** *computer machine.*

3.1 Book-based programing

3.1.1 Make book available : *book lists*

The information contained in the list should be suffcient to allow for the books to be found in the library and a mere listing of authors and title will always need to be extended either by a brief descriptive note on each book to indicate its particular value or the arrangement of the list under headings which will give such an indication. Inclusion in the list should be selective,

3.1.2 Reading programs.

Reading programs provide on incentive to some children to read books which they might otherwise not try. The following are successful programs undertaken by ASEAN Libraries :

a. Reading Camp.

The program aimed at exposing the student to the various skill vis speed reading, information handing skill. Various activities with local writers and film show, slides show were carried out. Some times the Reading Camps were schedualed to coincide with the National Book.

b. Reading Contest

It is aimed to acelerate reading habit among young generation by the use of libraries is considered as potential one in the nation building. The contest material is a number of books on literature : prose and poetry, selected by the National Committees. The contest participant are required to develop and deliver some book abstracts.

c. Book Talk

A low cost-effective strategy with ability to reach a wide andience a possible is book talk. The schools held book talk and the book reporting sessions by librarians's cooperation. The talk has been done through talk-cum-slide by lbrarians for new coming books or orientation in the library ; book talk contest, or book abstract contest after book talk sesion.

d. Read aloud to children

If the child is too old enough to talk to, she is old enough to read too. Most critical task during these early stage is learning how to calm the child, not to bring it under control. By 9 months the child was able to response to the sight of certain books and convey to her parents that these were her favorite. By age 5 she had taught herself to read. Fairy tales offer us an excellent opportunity to introduce the child or class to comparative literature.

e. Creative poetry

The rules for retaining of developing love of poetry within children are : *read it aloud; read it often; keep it simple; keep it joyous or spooky (ghost) or exciting.* poetry sets an

excellent medium for training the disciplines of listening and reading that are such integral parts of reading aloud program. It must be read word for word. "because it is bound by meter and trythm; every word and every syllable counts.

f. Picture Book

Star with picture books and build to storybooks and novel. Picture book can be read easily to children widely separate in age. Novels, however post a problem. If there are more than 2 years between the children, each child would benefit greatly if reading to her or him individually. Make sure the child can see the picture easily. In class, with the children in the back row can see the picture above the heads of the others.

g. Story hours

Story-telling is one of the easiest activities for the library to organize. Traditional tales or short stories of the same type and picture book are the easiest to use. Apart from these myths, legends, fairy tales, stories about animals, things which appeal to the sense of wonder and the senso of humor that stimulate the imagination of spirit of adventure are the most suitable.

3.1.3 Performance :

a. Dramatic Activities

Drama groups need careful organizing and adequate space. The approach is to outline a theme, based on a story or part of a book, which can then, by the cooperation of the children and the person in charge, be demonstrated in a dramatic form, each child undertaking and improving a role.

b. Puppets

Dramatic activity and craftwork can be combined in the making by the children of puppets, and their presentation of a performance based on a story or episode from a book. For both the puppeteers and audience of other children it will extend the awareness of the story and the book on which it has been based.

3.1.4 Craft activities

Craft activities can use both local traditional skill and a wide range of materials, many of which can be improvised from waste materials such as newspaper, disused packaging. cardboard and so on. The requirements are space and surfaces on which to work, a good collection of materials. The link with books can be twofold; the choice of themes from books, such as giants, prehistoric animals, or other features, and the use of books for instruction in methods and technics.

3.1.5 Competition : quiz

The quiz is aimed at encouraging students to read beyond their textbooks in school, promotion books as a source of information and promoting books themselves. Therefore it is necessary to decide precisely what the purpose of the quiz is in each competition. Book quiz can be done just for fun. They may be set at various level for under eights to elevens and over.

3.1.6 Activities for individual

Few libraries provide a wider range of educational games. However, where there is suitable accommodation, jigasaws, cardgames (particularly those linked to children's books and featuring book titles and characters and board games) may provide an additional attracrtion.

"Cognitive Games" are thinking game. It includes of language game which need no equipment or props only imagination and words. Some language games promote memory skill, some for listening and some are guessing games.

3.2. Bringing Books to Public

Here are some suggestion :

a. Prepare exhibit about book authors characteristics in novels or concepts retrieved from literature and or display maps of book shops libraries in the community.

b. Promote the production and distribution easy-to-read pamphet and low-price printed materials. These material informing what the public interest eg ; health or rural issues agriculture or animal breeding and encourage subscribing.

c. Collect oral and unprinted literature.

d. Set up book reader's group in villages of community. Do reading activities. Use books as a fundamental documents when news in newspaper, redio and TV. has been reported.

e. Encourage public to know books and book sources both reading and nonreading group.

3.3. New format to promote reading : computer machine.

As amount of information grows and as it become more easily and quickly available, there will be a need to teach individual strategies for both dealing with information and accessing the information available. More and more organizations, institutes and companies are putting their budget to computers, In the long run, the printed word will be converted to eletronic from this is high technology and opening the new arena of reading promotion. Those are collecting center for Audio-Visual and Computer-the based materials : Compact Disc Interaction (CDI) Compact Disc Read only memory (CDROM) audio.

Conclusion

This whole network of activities related to promotion of reading habits in ASEAN Libraries as cited above is a great task. It requires the cooperation of all concerned; but with all eyes focusecd on the same goal and imbued with the high spirit of service, success will not be that far. The journey may be long and difficult but the first step has to be made. This is a challeng, we are committed to accept.

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Latest Revision: *June 15, 1999*

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